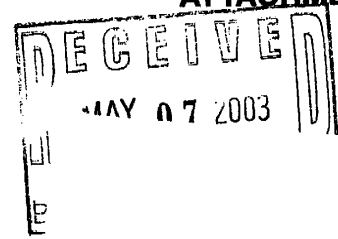




THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION
Office of the Chairman, Montgomery County Planning Board

August 1, 2002



Ms. Kathryn H. Porter, Mayor
Takoma Park Municipal Building
7500 Maple Avenue
Takoma Park, MD 20912

Re: Mandatory Referral No. 02101-TP-1
Takoma Park Community Center

Dear Ms. Porter:

At the regular meeting of the Planning Board on July 25 we reviewed the mandatory referral proposal by the City of Takoma Park for the Takoma Park Community Center located at 7500 Maple Avenue, Takoma Park, in the R-60 Zone. After discussion with staff and a representative from the City of Takoma Park, the Planning Board recommends that this mandatory referral proposal be APPROVED.

The Planning Board enthusiastically supports this proposal that promises to serve the entire community and we congratulate the City of Takoma Park on this project. We are especially pleased knowing that this community center will serve the large number of youngsters in the community who will now have greater neighborhood recreational opportunities.

The Planning Board supports the conveyance of valuable parkland for several reasons:

- o The proposed use as a recreation and community facility conforms to park interests;
- o The conveyed parkland will continue to be available to the public, but with improved access;
- o The construction for the improved entrance will be based on a fair exchange for the value of the parkland; and
- o There will be a net improvement of the entire site.

The Planning Board has the following comments to make about the proposal some of which reference the staff report which is attached.

1. Address the following pedestrian access issues:
 - a. Reduce the radius of the curb at the corner of Maple and Philadelphia Avenues and narrow the pavement to the minimum allowed to shorten the crossing distance for pedestrians. Coordinate with State Highway Administration.
 - b. On Maple Avenue, incorporate additional streetscape features such as seating areas, enhanced crosswalks, and decorative lights.
 - c. Revise the parking lot design to reflect better pedestrian and bikeway access and additional landscaping. Consideration should be given to reducing the number of spaces shown to accommodate the improvements (up to approximately 10%).

- d. Strengthen and enhance the pedestrian circulation, particularly to improve the connections between the open space and to enhance access to the building, as described in the body of this staff report.
2. Provide improvements in the vicinity of the Community Center to implement the Master Plan recommendations for an on-road bikeway (Class 2 or 3) on Maple Avenue and for a bike path (Class 1) to Piney Branch Road via Takoma/Piney Branch Local Park to include connections to the building for each.
3. Address the following parking issues:
 - a. Four surface parking spaces near the Philadelphia Avenue entrance should be either relocated or removed to provide a 25-foot setback consistent with the development standards in the zone.
 - b. Screening for the parking facility as described in the Zoning Ordinance should be provided along Philadelphia Avenue, Maple Avenue, and Grant Avenue.
4. Address compatibility issues with neighbors on Grant Avenue by providing for tree preservation and supplemental planting as appropriate along the slope. Select and locate lights to minimize intrusion into homes.
5. Work with SHA to address safety improvements along Philadelphia Avenue at the Main Entry Plaza.
6. Design and build the west side of Grant Avenue so that a sidewalk can be added in the future by the City.
7. Ensure a sufficient radius for emergency vehicles for the proposed redesigned cul-de-sac on Grant Avenue.

In addition, the Planning Board has placed the following conditions on the use of the parkland:

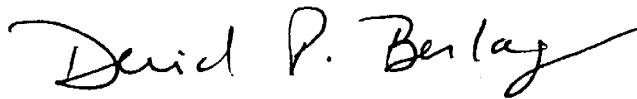
1. Prior to conveyance of parkland, the City of Takoma Park and the M-NCPPC shall enter into an agreement providing for the City to make certain improvements to the existing park entrance and slope on Grant Avenue. Construction for the entrance is to be determined based on a fair exchange for the value of the parkland. Construction shall occur as part of Phase 2 of the Community Center construction. As part of this agreement the City shall provide: A concept design for an attractive new entrance to the park from Grant Avenue with access for pedestrians, bicyclists and emergency and maintenance vehicles; and design and construction drawings.
2. The City of Takoma Park shall submit site, landscape, lighting, and stormwater management plans for these improvements to the M-NCPPC for review and approval prior to applying for a building permit. The City shall obtain a park permit prior to construction.

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3. The City of Takoma Park shall remove invasive species, provide a tree preservation plan, and stabilize slopes in the area to prevent erosion.
4. The City of Takoma Park shall officially abandon adjacent road right-of-way and record new plats to reflect the road abandonment and park conveyance.
5. In the event the conveyed property is no longer needed by the City for a public purpose, the land will be conveyed back to the M-NCPPC at no cost.

Thank you for working closely with staff and providing the necessary information to make this mandatory referral review possible.

Sincerely,



Derick P. Berlage
Chairman

DPB:MWF:MR

Attachment

cc: Rick Finn
Suzanne Ludlow

